UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2002/91
7 February 2002

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-eighth session
Item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MINORITIES

Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 2001/55, the Commission on Human Rights urged States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration, including through equal access to education and the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of the country; called upon the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues; requested the Working Group to contribute to and participate in the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; called upon States to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations and persons belonging to minorities in the work of the Working Group and invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to seek voluntary contributions in that regard; and requested the High Commissioner to invite Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to submit their views on how best to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

2. The Secretary-General was requested to report to the Commission at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request. It includes information submitted by Governments and other organizations on how best to protect the rights of minorities. Additionally, the present report refers to the deliberations at the seminar organized by the High Commissioner for representatives of international and regional organizations to discuss issues concerning their respective work on the protection of minorities, as requested in Commission resolution 2000/52.

II. PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO MINORITIES, INCLUDING THROUGH EDUCATION AND THE FACILITATION OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF SOCIETY AND IN THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

3. The participation of persons belonging to minorities in public and political life was selected as the theme for focused discussion at the seventh session of the Working Group on Minorities in May 2001 (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/22, paras. 65-128). During those deliberations, particular attention was devoted to the question of integration as well as cultural autonomy and territorial autonomy or democracy as approaches to minority protection. It was revealed that the different claims of persons belonging to minorities required a response specific to each situation, which took account of the particular historical, social, economic and other factors affecting communities. In particular, the appropriateness of measures for integration or autonomy or a combination of both was considered to be very much dependent upon whether minorities were dispersed and/or concentrated within particular areas of a given country. Participants also spoke about the dangers of exclusion arising from ethnically based Governments and of the importance of providing for the inclusion of all communities and groups in situations where the territorial decentralization of governance is pursued.

4. From the discussion, it was recognized that perspectives from and situations in Latin America, Africa and Asia as well as Eastern and Western Europe had revealed the variety and complexity of the situations facing minorities in different parts of the world and underscored the need to be more creative in finding solutions to protect and promote the rights of groups and communities. It was suggested that greater focus should be placed on supporting regional strategies for minority cooperation. Representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe shared the view that enhancing cooperation with regional mechanisms should be pursued more actively. Equally, the representative of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights proposed that the Commission and the Working Group should jointly study the relationship between indigenous populations and minority issues as it pertains to the African region.

5. Following this first debate on integration and autonomy, the Working Group recommended that there be further reflection on autonomist and integrative approaches to minority protection in multicultural societies, with a view to adopting a set of recommendations on these matters at the end of its eighth session, in May 2002. In preparation for this future debate, the Working Group requested, inter alia, its Chairperson-Rapporteur to draft a paper

identifying the effective and legitimate means which can be used by minorities to promote their rights and by Governments to maintain or restore human rights-based law and order. It was also decided that the Working Group, at its eighth session, in May 2002, would focus on the role of national development policies and international development cooperation in promoting and protecting the rights of minorities with a view to preparing recommendations for adoption at its ninth session in 2003. As a contribution to future discussions on development issues, Minority Rights Group International, with the support of the Working Group on Minorities and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), organized a meeting entitled "Tackling poverty and discrimination: mainstreaming minority rights in development assistance" (London, 26-27 July 2001). This meeting brought together some 50 experts from the Commission on Human Rights, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples, as well as representatives of human rights organizations. From the discussions at that meeting, recommendations were adopted under seven main themes. Those themes were: respecting standards, redressing discrimination, ensuring participation, assessing impact, strengthening capacity, international development goals, and national and transnational corporations. One of the main recommendations from that meeting referred to the 2015 International Development Goals and urged that minorities be at the centre of strategies for achieving those goals. It was further recommended that the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Group and other development actors mainstream minority rights within their country programmes. The conclusions of this meeting were taken into account in the recommendations of the International Seminar on Cooperation for the Better Protection of the Rights of Minorities, held in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001 (see E/CN.4/2002/92).

6. With respect to matters relating to education, the Working Group on Minorities has encouraged intercultural and inter-religious education within schools, including within its discussion on integrative and autonomy measures for facilitating the participation of minorities in public life. The importance of educating about tolerance has also been raised in recent statements of the Secretary-General (e.g. statement by the Secretary-General of 28 November 2001, on the OHCHR web site) and in reports of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance, with the latter proposing that educational programmes give prominence to teaching tolerance, the unity of humankind and cultural diversity, as well as an intercultural approach to teaching about history and religions. (A/CONF.189/PC.2/22, paras. 101-138).

III. EXPERTISE ON MINORITY ISSUES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING ON THE PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES, TO ASSIST IN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL SITUATIONS INVOLVING MINORITIES

7. It is recognized that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments, with civil society playing an important role. Thus, the role of the United Nations and the international community is to support national efforts for conflict prevention and assist in building national capacity in this field. Considerable attention is now being focused on the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate the prevention of conflict and the development of peace-building strategies. Within the context of establishing more effective responses for long-term conflict prevention, within the United Nations, the Secretary-General has most recently indicated his intention to continue dispatching United Nations interdisciplinary

fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions; to start submitting periodic regional and subregional reports to the Security Council on disputes that may potentially threaten international peace and security; to develop regional prevention strategies with regional partners and with United Nations agencies; to establish an informal network of eminent persons for conflict prevention; and to provide the capacity and resources for preventive action in the Secretariat. (See press release of 20 November 2001) on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.)

8. It is of interest to recall that conflict prevention and peace-building strategies were very much a focus of attention in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) which in its paragraph 29 reiterated the comments contained in the Secretary-General's Millennium Report (A/54/2000), according to which "in many cases of internal conflict 'poverty is coupled with sharp ethnic and religious cleavages' in which minority rights 'are insufficiently respected [and] the institutions of government are insufficiently inclusive'. Long-term preventive strategies in such instances must therefore work 'to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented ...'. Every group needs to become convinced that the State belongs to all people".

9. The Secretary-General is now intensifying his call for the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. In illustrating the rationale for a change in focus, the Secretary-General in his report on prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574) stated that "The main lesson to be drawn from past United Nations experience ... is that the earlier the root causes of a potential conflict are identified and effectively addressed, the more likely it is that the parties to a conflict will be ready to engage in a constructive dialogue, address the actual grievances that lie at the root of the potential conflict and refrain from the use of force to achieve their aims" (ibid., para. 167). His report also stated that, "The primary focus of preventive action should be in addressing the deep-rooted socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional, political and other structural causes that often underlie the immediate symptoms of conflicts" (ibid., para. 169).

10. Within the context of the work of the Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly and other human rights bodies and organs, there is growing recognition that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contributes to the stability of States. Likewise, the view has been gaining ground that the effective protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is an essential element of efforts to prevent conflict. The Sub-Commission, in its resolution 2001/9, for example, requested Mr. Asbjørn Eide, the Chairperson of the Working Group on Minorities, to update his study on peaceful and constructive approaches to situations involving minorities (para. 9).

11. Moreover, the Working Group on Minorities has supported the strengthening of capacity-building to already established institutions, including for the purposes of conflict prevention. For example, at its last session in May 2001, the Working Group expressed appreciation for the conflict prevention and resolution work undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE and asked other regional institutions to consider the possibility of establishing similar institutions. Equally, it proposed a regional approach to standard-setting for the protection of the rights of minorities. Moreover, the

Working Group's approach to the provision of expert advice on minority issues has been to call upon expertise from within a country as well as from the regional and international levels, with respect to facilitating conflict prevention and resolution. This trend may be said to be reflected in the work of the Sub-Commission, which, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 2001/9, asked Governments to consider providing the names of experts on minority issues in their country, with a view to facilitating their participation in regional and international meetings on minorities and in the provision of technical cooperation. From replies received to a note verbale sent by the High Commissioner which referred to this request, names of experts have been provided by several Governments (see E/CN.4/2002/91/Add.1).

12. OHCHR is also seeking to play a more active role in preventing the occurrence or continuation of human rights abuses. Such assistance is being pursued variously, including through a more active regional approach to the protection and promotion of human rights. This has led to the appointment of regional advisers, as well as to the development of regional human rights strategies by means of consultation and dialogue with, inter alia, Governments, senior representatives from United Nations and regional institutions and other experts from the regions. For example, the International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, co-organized by OHCHR, the European Commission and the Government of Croatia, was held in Dubrovnik from 8 to 10 October 2001. Participants at that meeting identified the main elements of a regional action plan and considered that the effective protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities were a fundamental part of the promotion and protection of human rights in democratic societies, and that a further consolidation and development of minority protection mechanisms at the global, regional and subregional levels was desirable. Other conclusions of the meeting referred to the importance of human rights education as an effective strategy for the prevention of human rights violations and for creating a culture of peace, tolerance and human rights in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Participants at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Dialogue organized by OHCHR on 6 and 7 December 2001 suggested, inter alia, that the situation of indigenous peoples, migrants, Afro-descendants and other minorities, as vulnerable groups, should be a focus of attention within the strategy of the Office for the region.* Equally, at the First African Regional Dialogue held in Geneva from 5 to 7 November, participants indicated the interest that exists in using human rights as a resource in conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace-building; gave recognition to the important role to be played by national human rights institutions and subregional economic institutions in preventing or resolving conflicts; and recommended that a future role of OHCHR should be to work in partnership with the Organization of African Unity/African Union, especially with respect to strengthening the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the envisaged African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights (see information available on the OHCHR web site at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/Africadialog1.htm).

13. Further views on enhancing cooperation with regional organizations and strengthening the role of independent national human rights institutions, especially in supporting conflict prevention efforts, were expressed by participants at the International Seminar on Cooperation for the Better Protection of Minorities which was held in Durban on 1, 2, and 5 September 2001 (see E/CN.4/2002/92). Members of national human rights institutions participating at that

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* The reports of these meetings are not yet available.

seminar spoke in particular about the obligation of such institutions to establish and develop their role in providing early warning of potential conflicts and problems. Suggestions were offered as to the steps to be taken to achieve this. For example, it was stated that regional, provincial and district branches of the national institutions should be established, which should be attentive to signs of brewing conflict and should alert other actors to emerging problems. National institutions were also viewed as having a responsibility to make the public aware of research into the causes of minority problems, to publicize the recommendations contained in reports of inquiry and to apply pressure upon Governments to enforce and implement the recommendations contained in such reports. The usefulness of national institutions in conducting public hearings on minority issues was also raised. Public hearings were considered to be of value in creating greater awareness about minority rights and issues as well as about multiculturalism, peace, tolerance and the importance of accepting diversity within society. As a final point, it was suggested that the issue of ensuring effective collaboration between national institutions and global and regional organizations for communicating early signs of conflict should be the subject of future discussions.

IV. WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

14. Mr. Asbjørn Eide, the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Minorities, delivered a statement to the plenary of the Durban World Conference in which he emphasized that a genuine application of the minority protection regime was in support of the elimination of racial discrimination. Mr. Eide, laid stress on the importance of a minority protection regime which ensured equal treatment at the individual level, promoted equal opportunity for members of all groups in society and created conditions for everyone within a pluralistic society to maintain one's dignity and identity. Apartheid was described as a system which had perverted the notion of the protection of minorities and respect for cultural diversity. He also spoke against programmes which had allegedly been drawn up to protect minorities but which in practice had become a shield behind which racial discrimination had been perpetuated under the pretext of differential treatment. He referred to the threats from secessionist movements driven by ethno-nationalist fervour which had resulted in ethnic cleansing, displacement and refugee flows, and, as a consequence, peaceful and constructive approaches to accommodating the concerns of different groups had risen higher on the international agenda. Finally, he mentioned that the protection of the rights of minorities had taken on a new urgency and had ushered in a new awareness of the importance of such rights, particularly as a means of avoiding conflicts.

V. MANUAL ON THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

15. The United Nations Guide for Minorities was launched on 1 September 2001 in Durban, by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Guide contains 17 separate pamphlets, including the text of the Declaration on National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, as well as the commentary on the Declaration prepared by Mr. Eide. In addition, pamphlets contained information on how minority representatives might make use of the procedures of both the bodies based on the Charter of the United Nations and the treaty bodies, as well as of regional human rights mechanisms such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples'

Rights, the Inter-American human rights system, the Office of the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE, and the European Convention on Human Rights and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. Various intergovernmental organizations had prepared contributions on their activities in relation to minority issues and how minority representatives could avail themselves of any procedures. Thus, information is provided on the minority-related work undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), OSCE and the European Union and European Commission. The intention is to use the Guide as a basis for future training activities. Individual pamphlets had been produced for each mechanism for ease of revision, the updating of information and the incorporation of additional pamphlets. The Guide is to be published in all six official languages of the United Nations. It is presently available on the web site, in English only, at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/01-minoritiesguide.html.

VI. PROMOTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, INCLUDING THROUGH THE HOLDING OF REGIONAL AND EXPERT SEMINARS

16. Regional and expert seminars are being organized with a view to further promoting awareness of the Declaration on Minorities and the work of the Working Group on Minorities. A training component is to be introduced into future regional meetings, the intention being to make use of the United Nations Guide for Minorities on such occasions.

17. Since the submission of the previous report to the Commission, a second workshop on "Multiculturalism in Africa: peaceful and constructive group accommodation in situations involving minorities and indigenous peoples", was held in Kidal, Mali, from 8 to13 January 2001; the report of this meeting is available in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2001/3. Participants to the workshop came from various subregions of Africa and observers from other regions of the world, several of whom attended the seventh session of the Working Group on Minorities, held from 14 to 18 May 2001 in Geneva, including representatives of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and women involved in peace-building efforts.

18. With respect to the Kidal workshop itself, participants raised issues relating to the education and the effective political participation of minorities and offered various recommendations for addressing such matters. They identified lack of access to political power, decision-making, basic services and resources as crucial factors in characterizing minorities. They drew attention to the reality of multicultural and multi-ethnic States prevailing in the African region and noted that the representation of all groups in the democratic process had to be respected and ensured. As access to education was identified as a major issue, it was suggested that education needed to be relevant and allow groups the opportunity to develop their culture and learn their language. Participants also recommended that minorities be consulted when development policies were being formulated and implemented and that they should share in the benefits of development. They also suggested that a further seminar be held in the region and that future seminars would benefit from the participation of African Governments, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, minorities and the academic community to

deepen the understanding of indigenous and minority issues in Africa. Moreover, they requested the United Nations to consider establishing a fund to assist representatives of minorities to attend the Working Group on Minorities, as had been established for the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

19. A third meeting on "Multiculturalism in Africa" is scheduled to be held in Gaborone from 18 to 22 February 2002. Moreover, a first regional meeting in the Americas on Afro-descendant issues in Latin America is provisionally scheduled to be held in La Ceiba, Honduras, from 14 to 17 March 2002, to be organized jointly by the Working Group on Minorities and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights. Additionally, preparations are under way for the convening of a first seminar on minority issues in Asia and the Pacific in the autumn of 2002, to be organized by the OHCHR. The Commission may also wish to note that the Working Group on Minorities undertook its first country mission to Mauritius, at the invitation of the Government, and met with the President, the Prime Minister, ministers of State, members of the judiciary, as well as politicians, civil servants, non-governmental organizations and minority and community representatives. The report of the mission will be submitted to the Working Group on Minorities.

VII. FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKING GROUP ON MINORITIES

20. OHCHR implemented the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights which called for greater participation of minority representatives in the Working Group on Minorities. Sufficient voluntary contributions were received to permit the 14 minority representatives from different regions of the world to participate in the seventh session of the Working Group. The Annual Appeal 2002 also contains a request for funds for the participation of minority representatives in the eighth session of the Working Group in May 2002. In addition, the Working Group and the Sub-Commission (see its resolution 2001/9, para. 5) have proposed the establishment of a voluntary trust fund, inter alia, to assist representatives of minorities and governmental experts from developing countries to participate in various meetings on minority issues.

VIII. PROPOSALS FOR THE BETTER PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO MINORITIES

21. In its resolution 2000/52, the Commission on Human Rights invited OHCHR to consider favourably the recommendation of the Working Group to organize a seminar for representatives of international and regional organizations, treaty bodies and specialized agencies to, inter alia, discuss issues concerning their respective work on the protection of minorities. Voluntary funds were requested for the holding of this meeting under the Annual Appeal 2001 and sufficient funds were received. In accordance with the Commission's resolution and Economic and Social Council decision 2000/269, OHCHR organized an international seminar on "Cooperation for the better protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities" in Durban on 1, 2 and 5 September 2001. The World Conference was considered the most feasible venue, given the participation called for under the resolution. Discussions at the seminar considered issues relating to: enhancing cooperation between international and regional mechanisms, including with a view to reducing duplication of work and parallel activities; strengthening the role of

human rights mechanisms, especially independent national human rights institutions, for the purposes of conflict prevention; ensuring the participation of minorities in decision-making and addressing group inequalities as root causes of conflict, especially through the development process; improving the exchange of information on minority issues, particularly on best practices, including respect for the recognition of the existence of minorities. The subjects discussed and the recommendations adopted covered a wide field, with linkages being made between the recognition of diversity and the promotion of sustainable human development with a view to contributing to the prevention of conflict. The report of the seminar and the recommendations it adopted are contained in document E/CN.4/2002/92; many of the recommendations were addressed to Governments for their consideration.

22. Additionally, the High Commissioner for Human Rights transmitted a note verbale to all States Members of the United Nations and Observer States, as well as intergovernmental and several non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, requesting information on how best to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in light of, inter alia, Commission resolution 2001/55. The text of replies received is contained in the addendum to this report. Information provided included details of the rights and freedoms for minorities as provided in several countries' domestic legislation, as well as policies adopted to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of minorities. The importance of undertaking preventive educational measures for supporting respect for human rights and tolerance and understanding among cultures, nations and religions, as well as the protection of cultural and religious sites was highlighted. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of future work being focused on sharing examples of good practices in minority protection and the promotion of a climate of tolerance. Different views were expressed regarding the feasibility of drafting a convention relating to the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Several replies did not favour a universal standard-setting exercise at the present time. It was indicated that the absence of a definition of minorities would make such an exercise difficult to support and that there were difficulties in achieving consensus at present on new standard-setting. In the light of such obstacles, it was suggested that the emphasis should be on taking due account of and give full effect to existing universal and regional instruments to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, such as the provisions contained in the six main international human rights instruments, individual complaints procedures, as well as the Declaration on Minorities. Mention was also made of the work of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities in supporting the adoption of recommendations and guidelines that aimed at facilitating greater cohesion in the implementation of international standards by States and bringing greater clarity to the content of minority rights in the fields of: education, language and participation in public life. The recommendations adopted in these fields are known as the Hague, Oslo and Lund Recommendations, respectively. Several replies referred to the possibility of exploring standard-setting and institution-building at a regional level. One of the replies in support of universal standard-setting suggested that such a convention could include provisions relating to international monitoring, particularly "on-the-spot" inquiries, an individual complaint mechanisms and the appointment of a special rapporteur on violations of minority rights. Moreover, information was provided on cases concerning minority rights that had been dealt with in the highest courts of a given country and on the work of several non-governmental organizations in the field of minority issues. Names of experts on minority issues were also suggested.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

23. The Secretary-General, in his Nobel lecture, indicated that the three priority roles for the United Nations in the twenty-first century are the eradication of poverty, the prevention of conflict and the promotion of democracy. These main issues are reflected in the themes being discussed at the next session of the Working Group where focus will be on the participation of minorities in public life, including through the pursuit of integration or autonomy measures, as well as on addressing group inequalities and the mainstreaming of minority concerns in the development process. With regard to the former issue, the discussion will also focus on identifying effective and legitimate means which can be used by minorities and Governments in their effort to promote their respective rights and to maintain or restore human rights-based law and order; as Mr. Eide was requested to prepare a working paper on that subject.

24. Clearly, information from various sources, as contained in the previous sections of this report, indicates the growing response to the Commission's concerns relating to the need to improve cooperation for the better protection of minority rights, especially from the perspective of the respective added value of each organization's work on matters relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. There appears to be growing recognition too that further measures are required to realize the Commission' recommendations for action, particularly in the event of Governments' requesting the provision of expertise on minority issues for the purposes of conflict prevention. In view of this reality, the Commission may wish to consider requesting the organization of a meeting between various human rights institutions and mechanisms from the regional, national and international levels for exchanging information on lessons learned and best practices in relation to conflict prevention matters.

25. Two thousand and two is the year of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Commission may wish to consider the suggestions offered by the Sub-Commission on possible activities to be promoted during the year (as contained in Sub-Commission resolution 2001/9, especially para. 5), in which it was suggested that consideration be given to, inter alia, the adoption of an international year for the world's minorities; the possible appointment of a special rapporteur on minority issues; and, the possible establishment of a voluntary trust fund to facilitate the participation in the Working Group of minority representatives and experts from developing countries and for the organization of other activities relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities.